(c) and (d) The second Bench of the National Commission has been constituted which has started functioning with effect from 24th September, 2003 to dispose off the consumer cases rapidly.

Procurement of paddy in Uttar Pradesh

†1738. SHRI HARENDRA SINGH MALIK: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Supreme Court has passed any order on the 29th August, 2003 regarding procurement of paddy in Uttar Pradesh;

(b) if so, whether the State Government is implementing the orders of the Hon'ble Supreme Court in procurement of paddy; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SUBHASH MAHARIA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) Th Hon'ble Supreme Court in its order, dated 29.8.2003 has considered the order passed by the High Court at Lucknow on a writ petition seeking certain reliefs in respect of paddy procurement policy of the Government of Uttar Pradesh and after consideration set aside the orders of the High Court and referred the matter to the High Court for fresh consideration. The matter is presently sub-judice in the High Court. The State Government of Uttar Pradesh has indicated that all previous orders issued by the High Court in the matter have been scrupulously implemented and the State Government has been procuring paddy as per approved specifications at MSP through its agencies.

Assistance to cane-growers

1739. SHRI KALRAJ MISHRA: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government had approved a Rs. 678.06 crore one time assistance package for sugarcane growers;

(b) if so, the details of the scheme, indicating nature and extent of assistance given to cane-growers and its *modus operandi;* and

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(c) whether the aid is confirmed to Uttar Pradesh, Uttaranchal, Haryana, Punjab and Bihar, if so, the reasons for discrimination against cane-growers of other States, including Maharashtra which contributes around 35 per cent to the country's sugar yield?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI V. SREENIVASA PRASAD): (a) to (c) The Central Government have allocated Rs. 678.06 crores for assistance to the Governments of U.P., Uttaranchal, Bihar, Punjab and Haryana to help clearance of sugarcane price arrears in respect of 2002-03 sugar season by private sugar factories in these States as indicated below:

Name of State	Allocation *(in Rs. crores)*
Uttar Pradesh	490.21
Uttaranchal	32.25
Bihar	39.91
Punjab	30.96
Haryana	84.73

The assistance will be in the nature of soft loan to the State Governments at a concessional rate of interest of 4% with an initial moratorium of three years and repayable within three years thereafter, to clear the sugarcane arrears for 2002-03 season arising out of the difference between the Statutory Minimum Price (SMP) and the State Adivsed Prices (SAP) with regard to private sugar mills only in these States.

The Central Government have also decided to offer assistance to the State Governments, including Maharashtra, by way of market borrowings to help sugar factories clear cane price arrears of 2002-03 sugar season. As per this decision, the State Governments would be extended financial support to meet the interest differential representing the difference between the Coupon Rate on the Bonds raised through additional market borrowings and 4% (the rate at which loan is being extended to the sugar mills). This assistance would be available to the mills in the cooperative and public sectors in the States where the practice of State Advised Prices (SAP) of sugarcane is prevalent and to all sugar

mills in the States where no such practice exists. The extent of open market borroings will depend the cane price arrears of 2002-03 sugar season.

Financial loss to FCI

†1740 SHRI LAJPAT RAI:
SHRI KAPIL SIBAL:

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Food Corporation of India had to face financial loss due to storage of more foodgrains than required buffer stock during the last few years;

(b) if so, the requirement of the foodgrains for buffer stock during the years 2000-01, 2001-02 and 2002-2003 alongwith the quantum of actual buffer stock of foodgrains; and

(c) the additional amount which Food Corporation of India had to bear during each of the above year due to it?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SUBHASH MAHARIA): (a) Food Corporation of India had to procure higher quantities of foodgrains, over and above the domestic demand and buffer requirement, in the recent past, due to attractive minimum support prices offered to farmers.

(b) and (c) The requirement of foodgrains for the buffer stock, the quantum of actual stock and the additional carrying cost incurred during 2000-01, 2001-02 and 2002-03 are as follows:—

	2000-01 (Actual)	2001-02 (Provisional)	2002-03 (RE)
Stock with FCI (lakh MTs) (as on 1st April)	199.40	273.92	288.46
Buffer Norms (lakh MTs) (as on 1st April)	158.00	158.00	158.00
Carrying Cost of average stock above buffer requirement (Rs. Crore)	1025.95	2620.83	1725.05

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.